

FRUIT GROWERS' LETTER



May, 1968

TREE DENSITY BIG FACTOR AFFECTING APPLE QUALITY

The density of an apple tree largely determines the quality of fruit the tree will produce, reports D. R. Neinicke, Research Horticulturist, USDA, Wenatchee, Washington. For best development of fruit size and color, the fruiting area must be exposed to at least 50 percent full sunlight.

Neinicke has observed that 30 percent of the average standard apple tree is shaded by itself; 15 percent of a semi-standard tree is shaded; 5 percent of the semi-dwarf is shaded, and only 2 percent of a dwarf tree is shaded by itself. Thus, reducing tree size reduces the shaded areas.

These data emphasize the importance of good pruning. Trees should be pruned so that all the fruit spurs have reasonably good exposure to light. At harvest time, observe the color and size of fruit on different parts of the tree. Did you do an adequate job of pruning? (from Pennsylvania Fruit News, February, 1968.)

TIME TO SPRING CLEAN YOUR SPRAYER

Did you clean your sprayer(s) this spring? This is an important job that is often neglected or completely ignored. The following procedure is recommended by Iowa State University:

1. Remove and clean all screws and boom extensions with kerosene and a small brush.
2. Mix one box of detergent with 30 gallons of water in the tank.
3. Replace the screen and boom extensions.
4. Fill the tank one-third to one-half full with 1 part of household amonia to 49 parts of water. Circulate this solution through pump and bypass, allowing a small amount to go out through the nozzle. Let the remainder of the solution stand overnight; then run it out through the nozzles.

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Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>

5. Flush with 2 tankfuls of clean water by spraying through the boom with the nozzles removed.

6. Never handle stopped-up nozzles with your bare hands. Most modern insecticides are absorbed rapidly through the skin.

7. If openings are clogged, don't try to clear them by placing the spray tip to your lips and blowing through it. Even small amounts of the more toxic insecticides taken into your body by mouth can cause sickness or even death.

8. Make sure all hoses are in good shape with no breaks or leaks in them. A bad hose under pressure can break in the field and spray you with toxic insecticides.

9. When you are working on insecticide applicators, keep a pail of water and soap handy to wash off any insecticides you might spill on yourself.

10. After working with spraying equipment, change your clothes and take a shower.

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QUALITY APPLES FOR MINNESOTA

Buyers are always concerned about the quality of apples they are receiving. A quality product well-packaged will draw repeat sales and good prices. People are willing to pay for high quality apples even though the price is high. However, any amount of good packaging and good marketing procedure cannot bring repeat and volume sales on a poor-quality product.

Who is responsible for poor quality apples? Some of the poor quality apples can be traced back to the grower. Can you improve your apple quality?

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SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE TO GUIDE

APPLE RESEARCH PROGRAM - taken

at Commercial Fruit Growers Short

Course - March 12, 1968 by C. Stushnoff

This brief survey did not turn up any new and startling facts but the results did help confirm our present plans for research and breeding with apples.

We have two general categories with respect to marketing and production objectives: the grower retail outlet type industry located mainly near the Twin Cities, and the wholesale outlet in the southeast corner of the state along the Mississippi River. The grower-outlet producers have generally found the varieties Haralson and Beacon to be their most profitable. The wholesalers stated that Delicious has been most profitable.

It is interesting that the variety Regent was mentioned most frequently as a candidate for new or replacement plantings. Apparently the fine quality of this variety has made it popular very quickly. Haralson, Delicious and several early varieties were also frequently mentioned as favorites for new plantings.

Without exception, fireblight is the growers' chief concern for research, both from the control viewpoint and from the standpoint of resistance in a breeding program. The survey substantiated our convictions that we need fireblight resistant varieties. Furthermore, we need attractive early varieties with good quality to replace Beacon. Later maturing varieties must have the excellent quality of Regent, production of Haralson, and good storage characteristics. We also need varieties which resemble Delicious but have better quality and greater production under our conditions for the wholesale phase of the industry. Apparently the wholesalers and/or retailers are reluctant to accept a variety which does not resemble Delicious or McIntosh. On the other hand, consumers have shown preference for good quality Minnesota varieties at grower-outlets. This preference means more money for some growers because these varieties have greater hardiness and adaptability to Minnesota conditions.

I would like to thank all those who answered the questionnaire and would encourage comments at any time.

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STATUS OF SEVERAL PESTICIDES

The status of certain pesticides registered with the USDA on a "No Residue" basis or with a zero residue tolerance is uncertain for the 1968 season. As noted in Special Report No. 6, "Weed, Insect, and Disease Control Guide for Commercial Fruit Growers," no tolerance or extension had been granted for the herbicide Amitrole for 1968. Recently, however, it has been determined that all labels covering the use of amitrole and Amitrole-T are still in effect and can be legally applied if label directions are followed.

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MICHIGAN GROWER SUCCESSFULLY STORES APPLES IN WATER

Michigan grower Rodney Bull has successfully conducted experiments with water storage of apples.

Last winter he built a cement pit, shaped like a swimming pool, and filled it with water. He then dumped in about 2,000 bushels of apples, drained the water and refrigerated the fruit. When time came to open the pit, he pumped in water and floated out the apples.

It works like controlled atmosphere (CA) storage, Bull reported, after he removed good condition apples in April. He filled the pit to a depth of about 4 feet with apples without bruising and he believes he can go to 5 or 6 feet in depth without injury. (from Fruit Growers News, March, 1968.)

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STRAWBERRY FIELD DAY IN WISCONSIN

A Midwest Strawberry Field Day is being planned by the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Strawberry Growers Association, according to G. C. Klingbeil, Extension Horticulturist.

The Field Day will be held at the Peninsula Experimental Station, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, July 10, 1968.

Items of interest include new strawberry selections, cultural and adaptation studies, nematode control studies, and strawberry machinery and equipment. In addition you will also be able to see apple variety trials, apple rootstock studies, and weed control studies. It should be a good program. Save July 10 for the Midwest Strawberry Field Day in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin.

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NEWS BRIEFS

from the

Minnesota Fruit Growers' Association

The following is a brief summary of items which were discussed at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Fruit Growers' Association on March 12, 1968, (as reported by G. P. Yates, Vice President and Treasurer, Minnesota Fruit Growers Association.)

G. P. Yates attended the trustees meeting of the NAI in February and reported that their are now 15 States contributing

100% of their quota, including Minnesota. Due to the smaller average for the last 3 years crops our quota will be down to \$766.00 from our present one of \$798.00. However, this is just a short respite as next year our average will take in our two record years of 1964 and 1966 and will push our quota into the \$1000.00 range. We must find a way to get everyone to pay their fair share if we are to meet our quota without having to resort to a marketing order.

If you are having a deer problem you are advised to get in touch with your game warden and let him see the damage. Also give him an appraisal of the amount of the damage so that he can forward it to his superior. If the State wishes to protect the deer population then it must pay all damages that the deer do to private property. If the State does not pay for these damages then a grower is entitled to shoot any deer damaging his trees, but remember he must turn over the deer to the warden. See the February issue of Farm Journal on the Federal ruling on the right of a farmer to protect his property. Even if deer proof fences are provided by the states, they are responsible for damage. A recent court case in Vermont appears to confirm this.

Attention of all growers is called to the new Fair Labeling Law. If you have stocks of boxes or bags which do not comply with the new regulations you must personally request an extension from the Food and Drug Administration. Requests should show good cause, the number of packages on hand, time required to use them, samples of labels etc, and the number of packages or labels that have already been revised to comply. NAI and IAA has been working on this for you and has now received confirmation of the exemption of 3 lb. bags from the dual weight declaration (no ounces need be on this package as was first stated).

IRS has approved 7% investment credit on certain types of storage facilities, including controlled atmosphere (CA). If anyone has built or is planning to build storage this year and wishes to apply for the 7% he should get in touch with NAI first so that he can be brought up to date on the procedure involved and the latest rulings.

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